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**To: All U.S Citizens**

**From: Henry Hand, U.S. Consul**

**Date: January 30, 2005**

**Subject: Update on Avian Flu**

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**- THIS MESSAGE IS FOR ALL U.S. CITIZENS -**

The American Embassy is issuing the following notice to update the American community in Cyprus on the spread of avian influenza in the region. A European Union laboratory in the United Kingdom has confirmed that samples from two dead birds found in a rural area of Cyprus west of Famagusta have tested positive for the H5N1 virus. Local authorities are taking steps in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations to cull poultry in the surrounding area and monitor for further indications of avian influenza. Americans crossing the “green line” can also expect delays as government health authorities have instituted additional checks to screen for poultry and poultry products.

**To date there have been no reported cases of Avian Influenza in humans in Cyprus.**

The Turkish Ministry of Health has confirmed <sup>2</sup> human cases of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza. To date, four people have died from avian influenza in Turkey. Turkish authorities are currently investigating additional human cases. The Turkish Ministry of Agriculture has announced that animal infections have been found throughout the country.

The Department of State, the CDC and the WHO have not issued any travel alerts or warnings for Cyprus or any other avian influenza-infected areas.

Worldwide, the vast majority of the known human cases have resulted from direct contact with poultry, and there is only limited evidence to suggest possible human-to-human transmission. Turkey has no evidence of human-to-human transmission. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the WHO, and the Department of State are nonetheless concerned about the potential for human-to-human transmission of this highly dangerous flu strain, and are working closely with other partners in an effort to monitor the outbreak. Given the presence of the H5N1 strain in neighboring Turkey, American citizens are advised to avoid contact with live poultry, wild birds, commercial or backyard poultry farms, and poultry markets. The World Health Organization advises that it is safe to eat properly cooked poultry products even in areas where the H5N1 virus is present. American citizens should clean and thoroughly cook any poultry products before eating.

In the event of a pandemic, the Department of State's ability to assist Americans traveling and residing in Cyprus may be severely limited due to restrictions on local and international movement imposed for public health reasons. Furthermore, American citizens should take note that the Department of State cannot provide Americans traveling or living abroad with medications, including in the event of a pandemic. In addition, the Department of State has asked its embassies and consulates to consider preparedness measures for its employees overseas that take into consideration the fact that travel into or out of a country may not be possible, safe or medically advisable. Guidance on how private citizens can prepare for a "stay in place"

response, including stockpiling food, water, and medical supplies, is available on the CDC and pandemicflu.gov websites.

For more information on avian influenza, see the State Department's Avian Influenza Fact Sheet at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health\\_1181.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1181.html), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' publication "Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families" at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov> and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Travel Notice" at [http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/avian\\_flu\\_ig\\_americans\\_abroad\\_032405.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/avian_flu_ig_americans_abroad_032405.htm).

If you are planning any travel, please review the updated country and avian influenza information from the Department of State's Consular Information Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov> or by calling the Department of State's toll-free number, 1-888-407-4747, or if calling from overseas, 202-501-4444.